

J. A. le Doux

JACQUES ALPHONSE LE DOUX, friend and correspondent of members of the staff of the Botanic Gardens, Singapore, for more than fifty years, died in the Johore General Hospital on 1st April, 1961, at the age of 80.

Le Doux was born at Liverpool (according to the *Sunday Times* of 2nd April), but spent his boyhood at a country house at East Molesey in Surrey, near the river Thames, opposite Hampton Court. His father had a large garden, with greenhouses containing orchids and other tropical plants, and thus began the interest in plants (and perhaps the call of the tropics) that lasted all his life. With his brother Gustave he volunteered for service in the war in South Africa, and remained in that country until 1906, when he again joined his brother, who had previously come to a tin mine in Johore.

Jacques soon turned from tin-mining to rubber-planting, in the Kota Tinggi district, where he remained for the rest of his life. After working on several estates, he established his own small rubber plantation at the 3rd mile, Mawai Road, calling it Tutankhamen Estate. There I first visited him in 1925, and found that he was known to Malays in the neighbourhood as "Tuan Jack". Later, through no fault of his own, he lost this property, and built a house for himself in an area of orchard land, which he called "The Dusun", on the other side of the road. He was there at the time of the Japanese invasion of Malaya, and was interned in Singapore during the years 1942-45. In the civilian internment camp he became friendly with George Peet, of the *Straits Times* editorial staff. Peet was impressed by le Doux's local knowledge of the countryside, its people and natural history, and after the war persuaded him to allow publication of some reminiscences in the *Sunday Times*. I remember le Doux telling me that he was very hesitant about publication, and that, though Peet wished him to write more, he doubted if he could do so. But he was persuaded to continue, and Tuan Djek's "Countryman's Journal" became a regular feature of the *Sunday Times*, so that he and his dusun, the cook and the cook's growing family, the neighbours and the plants and animals which interested him, became well known to a large public in Malaya.

Early in his planting career le Doux established contact with H. N. Ridley, and sent him specimens of plants from time to time, calling at the Gardens on his occasional visits to Singapore, and

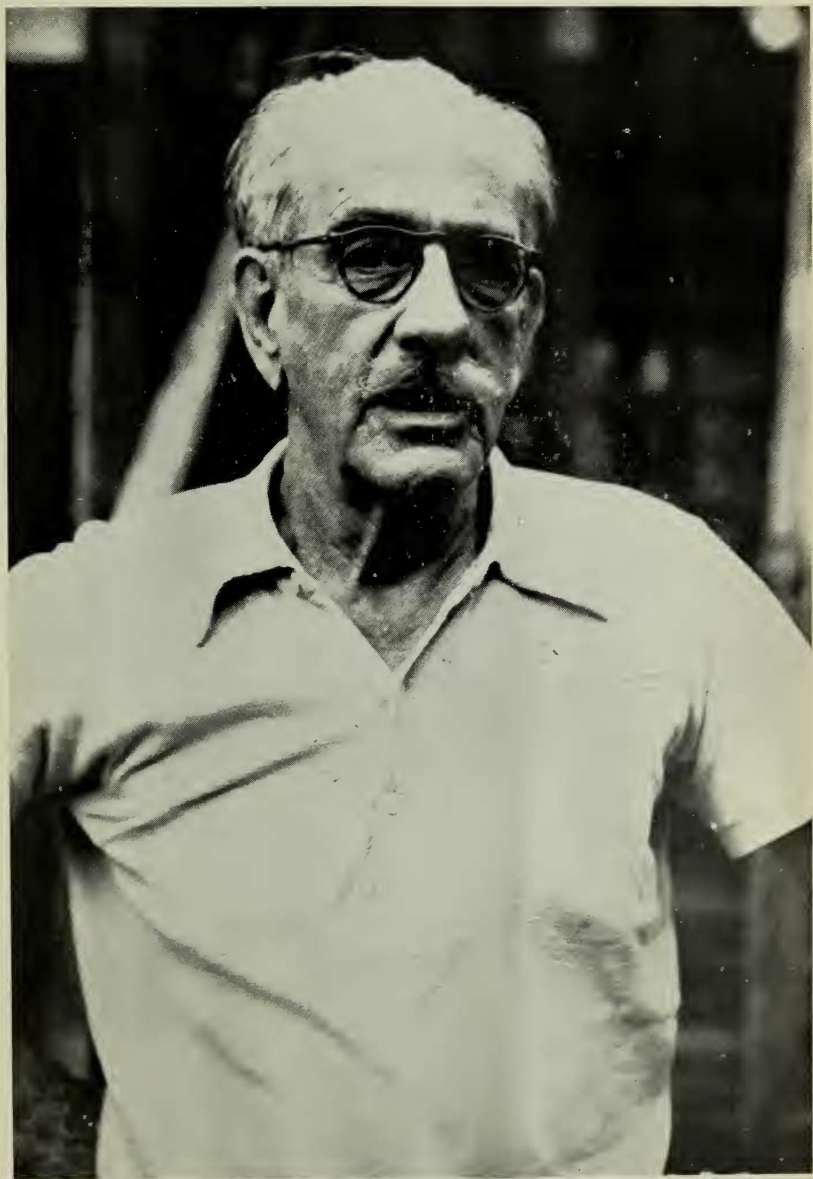


Photo: R. E. Holtum

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